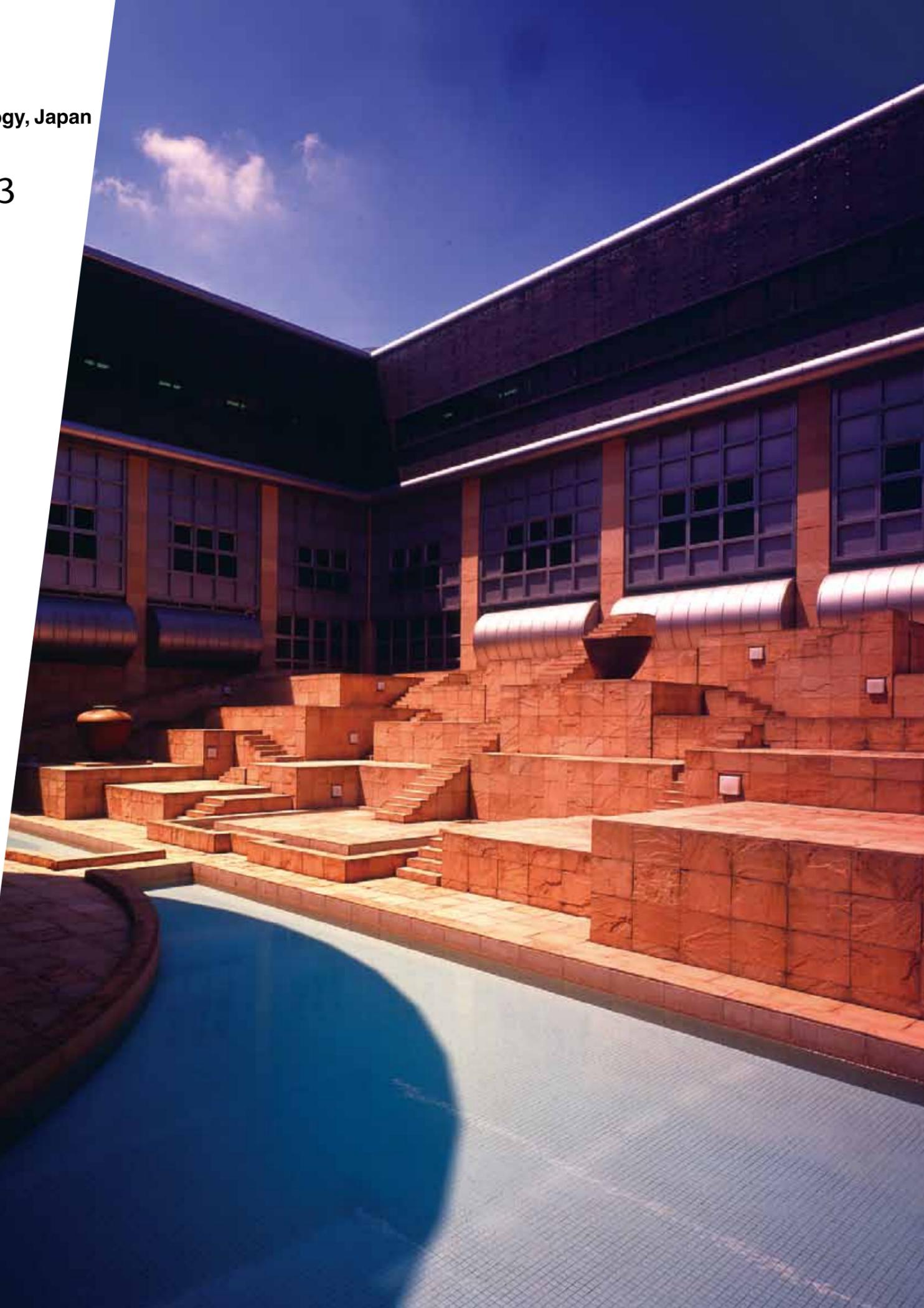


Survey and Guide 2012–13

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Preface

The National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku) is a research institute and museum that provides graduate-level training in anthropology and ethnology. It was founded in 1974 as an Inter-University Research Institute. Since April 2004, it has been a member of the National Institutes for the Humanities as a part of the Inter-University Research Institute Corporation.

Inspired by the Minpaku motto, “To the Ends of the Earth, to the Depths of Knowledge,” Minpaku researchers conduct research on societies, cultures, and the changes brought about by globalization at sites worldwide. They also organize Core Research Projects, Joint Research Projects, International Symposia and other academic meetings, and contribute to expanding the boundaries of research by hosting a thousand researchers from Japan and other countries. In pursuit of deeper understanding of cultures and values in the places where research is conducted, they also collect and preserve artifacts, audio-video, and documentary materials.

Minpaku displays those research results in new types of exhibits. It also provides information about them through publications, lectures, symposia, our website and mass media. Functioning as a center for academic information, Minpaku also makes materials and information widely available for use by researcher communities and private citizens. As an Inter-University Research Institute committed to fostering young talent in cultural anthropology and related fields, Minpaku also offers Ph.D. programs through the School of Cultural and Social Studies of the Graduate University of Advanced Studies.

People, goods, and information now flow freely around the globe, making it easy to obtain what we want. As a result, our lives have become more convenient. At the same time, however, dominant values and cultural elements are affecting societies and cultures everywhere, resulting in dramatic changes that affect not only the contexts of our daily lives but also how we think about them. As globalization advances, local and ethnic tensions and conflicts intensify, gaps in access to wealth and information increase, and friction and disputes arising from cultural and religious differences are becoming ever more common.

In March of last year, northeast Japan experienced an enormous earthquake and tsunami, one of whose effects was the nuclear incident in Fukushima. The extent to which human knowledge falls short of the power of nature and the fragility of human technology and industry were laid bare for all to see. It is clearly time to rethink the relation of humanity and civilization to nature.

As humanity confronts these issues, the importance of cultural anthropology and of the evidence provided by anthropological research on other cultures as well as our own is growing. How we will respond to the spirit of inquiry and the thirst for knowledge that more and more people bring to our work is an issue with which we must grapple seriously.

We want Minpaku to be a “forum for learning,” where everyone can enjoy new discoveries, enrich their knowledge, and become better informed.

Your ongoing guidance and support for Minpaku are profoundly appreciated.

SUDO Ken'ichi
Director-General